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THREE ETRUSCAN PAINTED SARCOPHAGI

BY

F. B. Tarbell
Professor of Classical Archæology in the
University of Chicago

Berthold Laufer
Curator, Department of Anthropology

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The three sarcophagi to which this article is devoted were purchased on two occasions by the Field Museum, through the intermediation of Mr. Edward E. Ayer, from a well-known dealer in Rome, Alessandro Jandolo. Two of the three, referred to below as A and B, are mentioned as new acquisitions in the Annual Report of the Field Museum for 1901–02, p. 95. These two were seen by the late Professor Furtwängler in the early autumn of 1904, and are briefly described in the report published by him after his return to Munich on the antiquities, Greek, Italian, etc., which he found in American museums.[1] The third sarcophagus, C, acquired some ten or eleven years later, is mentioned in the Annual Report for 1912, but has received no further notice in print.

The information available regarding the discovery of these sarcophagi is painfully meager and contradictory. Five similar specimens are known to have been found, probably three in or about the year 1900, and two subsequently, perhaps as late as 1910 or 1911. These all passed through the hands of the Jandolo brothers. From a recent letter[2] written by Alessandro Jandolo to Mr. Ayer in response to inquiries it appears that the two specimens which are not in Chicago were sold to Dr. Ludwig Pollak, who disposed of one to the Museum in Berlin, and the other, Jandolo thinks, to "a great Copenhagen brewer" (that is, Jacobsen). Of the latter I can learn nothing further. As it is not included in the catalogue of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek (edition of 1907), it must, if in that collection, have been acquired

[1] Neue Denkmäler antiker Kunst III, Münchener Sitzungsberichte, 1905, p. 248.

[2] The relevant part of Jandolo's letter is, with his own punctuation, as follows: "Ricordo benissimo i tre sarcofagi in tufo da Ella acquistati. Anzi come da sua lettera, erano cinque e due di questi furono comprate dal Prof. Lodovico Pollak e son sicuro che uno trovasi a Berlino, l'altro credo lo comprasse un grande negoziante di birra di Copenhagen. Riguardo la provenienza furono da mio fratello Antonio comprati nelle vicinanze di Toscanella (ora [sic!] Toscania circondario Viterbo) in concorrenza dell' antiquario Saturnino Innocenti. L'epoca in cui furono trovati fu di pochi mesi avanti che Lei ne facesse acquisto da me; suppellettili non ve ne erano essendo state le tombe già aperte anticamente. . . . . Non so darle altri dettagli essendo morto il mio povero fratello e il proprietario che glieli vendette." The foregoing account would naturally be understood as implying that the five sarcophagi were bought by Antonio Jandolo at one time. This, if intended, is almost certainly an error, for according to Mr. Ayer's clear memory C was not in Jandolo's possession at the time when A and B were bought for the Field Museum.

subsequently to 1907. The former is catalogued, with a single small picture, among the recent accessions to the Antiquarium of the Old Museum in Berlin,[1] and is there said to have come from Civita Castellana, the site of the ancient Falerii. But Jandolo in the letter already cited testifies that all five pieces were bought in the vicinity of Toscanella, a place nearly thirty miles in a bee line to the northwest of Civita Castellana. Although he does not actually say that the pieces were found in that neighborhood, that is the apparent implication of his words. His testimony receives some confirmation from the character of the material of which the sarcophagi in Chicago are composed. A sample of this has been examined at the Geophysical Laboratory in Washington, D.C. Dr. H. S. Washington of that laboratory, who kindly undertook the examination, reports that the material, "a volcanic tuff, and apparently a leucite-trachyte . . . . probably comes from the neighborhood of Toscanella, where leucite-trachytes and their tuffs are abundant, rather than from Civita Castellana." Toscanella, then, the ancient Toscania in southern Etruria, may with much probability be regarded as the place of discovery of the five sarcophagi in question.

Undecorated sarcophagi similar in form to those now under discussion are familiar to students of Etruscan antiquities. Specimens found at Narce in the Faliscan territory are figured in the elaborate report on that site in the Monumenti antichi, Vol. IV, Figs. 63, 64, 70, and Plate V, 3, 4, of the accompanying *Atlante*. But these painted specimens constitute, for the period to which they belong, a new class. Moreover, the designs, when compared with contemporary Etruscan designs hitherto known, present some novelties. Hence the belief has arisen in certain quarters that, while the sarcophagi themselves are ancient, the paintings upon them are modern. This belief receives some encouragement from the appearance of A and B, of which the latter certainly and the former possibly have been retouched, though, as is believed, with scrupulous regard for the original traces. C, on the other hand, is entirely free from suspicious appearances. In fact, the extreme faintness or even total obliteration of parts of the design affords a strong guaranty of genuineness. Moreover, the specimen in Berlin is evidently accepted there as genuine. Under these circumstances I have no hesitation in presenting the sarcophagi of the Field Museum as examples of early Etruscan art, to be added to the paintings on early chamber-tombs, the vases, painted or with designs in relief, of Etruscan fabric, the bronze reliefs, and the other miscellaneous artistic products of Etruria in the period from the late seventh century B.C. to the fifth century B.C. inclusive.

[1] Anzeiger of the Jahrbuch des archäologischen Instituts, 1903, pp. 38–39.

A (CAT. NO. 24645)

Outside measurements: length, 1.25 m; breadth (of receptacle, not cover), 0.48 m; height (to top of cover), 0.95 m. Inside measurements: length, 1.065 m; breadth, 0.305 m; depth, 0.215 m.

The cover is broken into three pieces. There are only slight, if any, traces of repainting.

The designs on the two long sides (Plate XXIX) are closely similar: two large birds (geese?) fronting each other, with a cup between them. On each end (Plate XXX) is an identical floral ornament, the upper part of which is on the cover. On each side of the top of the cover (Plate XXIX), at the right-hand end, is a walking sphinx fronting to right. There are no unmistakable traces of any figures occupying the left-hand ends of these two surfaces. Probably the two sphinxes, symmetrically placed as they are, were thought sufficient.

The colors used are blue, black, brown, yellow, and red. The background is everywhere blue. The outlines are partly black, partly yellow, partly red. The four large birds are colored alike: wings brown and red, other parts yellow. The floral ornaments on the ends are red. The sphinxes have hair brown; faces and breasts yellow; wings yellow, red, blue, and brown; remaining parts red.

B (CAT. NO. 24644)

Outside measurements: length, 1.89 m; breadth, 0.56 m; height, 1.055 m. Inside measurements: length, 1.6 m; breadth, 0.395 m; depth, 0.215 m.

The cover is broken into two pieces. A few unimportant cracks have been filled in with plaster, which has been smeared over to resemble the tuff, and the paintings have been extensively retouched.

On one of the two long sides (Plate XXXI) are two walking sphinxes fronting each other, with a floral ornament between them. On the other long side (Plate XXXII) are two dogs similarly placed, with a different floral ornament between them. On each end (Plates XXXIII–XXXIV) is a floral ornament, the upper part of which is on the cover. These two end ornaments are similar, but not identical. On the top of the cover are four marine monsters (hippocamps), two on each side. Between the two on one side, but apparently not on the other, is a cup. At each of the four corners of the top of the cover is a palmette, inclined inward (Plate XXXII).

Judging by present appearances, the colors used are the same as upon A: blue, black, brown, yellow, and red. The background is everywhere blue. The outlines of figures and ornaments are partly black, partly yellow,

partly red. Of the two dogs the one at the right has head, shoulder, further legs and tail yellow; other parts red. The one at the left reverses these colors, the only exceptions being that the tongues of both dogs are red and that the eyes are alike, with red rims and black pupils. The two sphinxes show a less simple variation of colors. The one at the right has hair, breast, wing, tail, and legs red; other parts, except face, blue. The one at the left has hair, breast, and wing blue; further legs and tail yellow; other parts red. Both sphinxes have reddish faces and red and yellow lines upon their wings. On each side of the top of the cover the two hippocamps are painted alike: on one side with blue heads, red bodies, yellow fins and tails; on the other (Plate XXXII) with yellow bodies and red heads, red being used also for flippers, dorsal fins, and parts of tails. The palmettes are red. The other ornaments are done in red and brown.

c (cat. no. 24437)

Outside measurements: length, 1.85 m; breadth, 0.575 m; height, 1.02 m. Inside measurements: length, 1.5 m; breadth, 0.37 m; depth, 0.205 m.

The cover is made of two unequal pieces. There are no signs of repair, except at one corner of the cover; and the colors are believed to be untouched by any modern hand.

On one long side (Plate XXXV) is a monster, seen in front view, having the form of a man as far as the hips, but with serpents in place of legs. He wears a tunic, which ends in flaps about his loins, and holds by his right hand against his right shoulder an object which may be a cornucopia. The serpents, coiling symmetrically, end in heads, and are confronted by two large birds (swans?) which stand with bills wide open, as if hissing. On the other long side (Plate XXXVI) are two marine monsters (sea dragons) fronting each other, with an indistinct object, probably floral, between them. On one end (Plate XXXVII) a winged marine monster can be made out with some difficulty. On the other end there are faint traces of a similar creature. The top of the cover is largely overgrown with moss (genus *Hypnum*), now dry. Traces of painted patterns are discernible on the vertical surfaces of the cover.

On the principal long side (Plate XXXV) eight or perhaps nine colors[1] are used, as follows: (1) dark brown, for outlines and inner drawing and for cornucopia; (2) brownish purple, for hair of monster and for heads of birds; (3) red, for touches on the hair and for the rims of the birds' eyes; (4) orange red, for serpents and for birds' wings; (5) diluted orange, for face, neck, and

[1] In determining the colors I have had the valuable help of Miss Lucy C. Driscoll.

arms of monster; (6) yellow, for tunic of monster and for bills and tails of birds; (7) light yellow, for necks and bodies of birds; (8) blue, for background. In addition there seem to be traces of (9) white, the purpose of which is hard to make out. Possibly it may have formed a border inclosing the design on three sides, viz., along the upper edge and at the two ends. Of course, some of the above-mentioned colors may have been obtained by mixing, but there is no indication of one color being laid on over another, as is reported for the specimen in Berlin.

On the other long side (Plate XXXVI) the coloring is simpler: outlines brown; heads and bodies mainly orange red, but with brownish purple bellies; tails yellow and brownish purple; indistinct object in the center orange, red, and yellow; background blue.

On the better-preserved end (Plate XXXVII) the outlines are in part single, like those on the long sides, in part double, brown and yellow, the latter color lying outside the former; wings are orange red, as is also a patch on the belly; head and tail yellow; remainder of the creature blue. Contrary to the practice elsewhere, the background on this end is not painted blue, but left in the natural color of the tuff.

Unlike the sarcophagus of this group in Berlin, which has six cubical feet, viz., one at each corner and one at the middle of each long side, the three specimens above described have each two feet, which extend from side to side at some distance from the ends, as may be easily recognized from the illustrations.

The smallness of these sarcophagi is remarkable. A is obviously for a child. B and C, though larger, have cavities only 1.6 m or 1.5 m in length and 0.395 or 0.37 m in breadth. The specimen in Berlin is somewhat wider, but the available length is no greater.[1] If these three were occupied by adult men or women extended at full length, these persons must have been of very small stature.[2] The shallowness of the cavities need occasion no

[1] The measurements given are: length, 1.75 m; breadth, 0.73 m; thickness of walls, 0.13 m. This would indicate 1.49×0.47 m as interior dimensions.

[2] Few data for comparison are available. The dimensions of the tuff sarcophagi found at Narce are not given in the Monumenti antichi, Vol. IV. The archaic terra-cotta sarcophagus from Cervetri in the Louvre (LONGPÉRIER, Musée Napoléon, III, Plate XXXV) is 2 m in length. The similar specimen from the same site now in the Villa Giulia near Rome is of the same length. Its cavity measures 1.62×0.60 m (Monumenti antichi, Vol. VIII, pp. 521 ff.). On the other hand, the specimen now in the British Museum is only 4 ft. 5 in. (1.345 m) in length. The fact is stated without comment by MURRAY, Terracotta Sarcophagi in the British Museum, p. 25, as well as by WALTERS, Catalogue of the Terracottas in the British Museum, p. 183. This sarcophagus could not have been intended for a child, because, like the two other terra-cotta sarcophagi, it has figures of a man and woman, obviously a married pair, on the cover. It is strange that its smallness has not been brought into the discussion regarding its authenticity.

difficulty, inasmuch as the covers are hollowed out underneath. Thus C has the cross-section shown in Fig. 9, and A and B are similar.[1]

The surfaces of the sarcophagi have been somewhat planed down, but are still anything but smooth. The paintings are executed directly upon the tuff. This need occasion no surprise. To be sure, the paintings upon the walls of Etruscan tombs are generally executed by the fresco process upon a stucco ground. But this is not invariably the case, as witness several tombs at Corneto Tarquinia, where the color is applied directly to the tuff walls.[2] Even without these analogies the procedure adopted for the sarcophagi would seem to be the natural one.

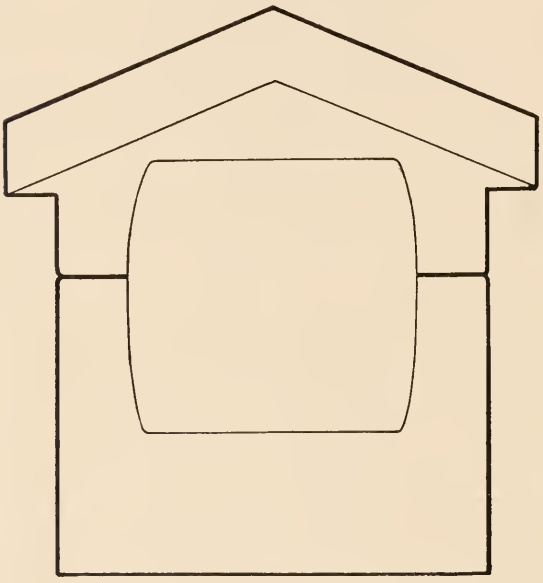

Fig. 9.
Cross-Section of Sarcophagus.

The designs, like those of Etruscan art in general, are borrowed in the main from Greece. Sphinxes and marine monsters are particularly affected by Etruscan sepulchral decoration, and the snake-legged giant or demon also occurs. It is tempting to believe that some special significance was attached to these creatures. Perhaps they were regarded as warders of the tomb. The dogs also would easily lend themselves to the same interpretation. The aquatic birds are less easy to account for. Perhaps they are as devoid of special meaning as the vegetable ornaments.

The palmettes on the cover of B are of an exceptional, barbarized form. The volutes found at the base of the ornament in Greek examples are here reduced to mere loops; the fan-shaped piece from which the petals regularly spring is lacking, and the petals appear rather as if arranged along a central

[1] Compare the cross-section given in the Monumenti antichi, Vol. IV, *Atlante*, Plate V, 3.

[2] Antike Denkmäler, Vol. II, text to Plates XLI, XLII; Notizie degli scavi, 1905, p. 78.

stem. A somewhat similar form of palmette may be seen on an Etruscan black-figured vase in Munich.[1]

Aquatic birds belong to the familiar repertory of early Greek and Etruscan art, and we sometimes find two confronted, as on A and C.[2]

The dog occurs occasionally on early vases, but the only near parallel which I can find to the dogs of B is afforded by the Berlin sarcophagus of this group. That has two dogs of the same breed as these, confronting each other, with mouths open and tongues hanging out.

The sphinxes of A easily fall into place among the innumerable examples of their kind. Their wings have the recurved form usual in archaic Greek and Etruscan art, and their inner markings are normal enough.[3] The sphinxes of B, on the other hand, are peculiar. Their wings approximate the typical form, to be sure, but the inner markings of the wings, constructed on two different systems, have no near analogies discoverable by me. Furthermore these two sphinxes, instead of having hair recognizable as a distinct mass, have what look like close-fitting caps, which are carried down without a break to form the breasts.

The hippocamps of B belong to a numerous family, but they deviate in several particulars from the usual archaic type.[4] Thus the equine neck is without a mane, in lieu of which there are lines suggestive of some abnormal, perhaps marine, growth. The equine legs terminate, not in hoofs, but in finlike forms. Finally the lower part of the creature makes a complete coil, such as is elsewhere unexampled before the fifth century B.C. The sea dragons on one of the long sides of C differ from the hippocamps of B chiefly in the form of the heads, in the notched growth above the heads and necks, and in the absence of legs[5]—peculiarities which may possibly have been suggested by the actual sea horse. Monsters of this type are common, as is also the winged variety represented on one end or both ends of C, but apparently not before the fifth century B.C.

The half-human monster occupying the central place on one of the long sides of C (Plate XXXV) belongs to a family more common in late than in

[1] No. 838. SIEVEKING and HACKL, Die k. Vasensammlung zu München, Fig. 100.

[2] For example, No. 797 of the Munich collection of vases (*op. cit.*, Plate XXXI).

[3] Compare, for instance, the sphinxes on a Corinthian vase of the sixth century: GERHARD, Auserlesene Vasenbilder, Plate CCXX, reproduced in ROSCHER, Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie, Sphinx, 1395–96.

[4] See the exhaustive article *Hippokampos* in the new edition of PAULY'S Realencyclopädie, to which indebtedness is acknowledged.

[5] In front of each dragon there is a notched something which suggests a flipper. But apparently it belongs to the central ornament and not to the dragon.

early Greek and Etruscan art. However, he is not unknown in early art, sometimes with wings, sometimes without, the snaky legs sometimes tapering off into tails, sometimes terminating in heads, as here. The human head is usually bearded, but not always.[1]

Inasmuch as there is no record of the character of the tomb or tombs in which the three sarcophagi under discussion were found, nor of the associated pottery or other objects, if there were any such, there is no evidence as to the period or periods to which they should be assigned, except such as is afforded by the form of the sarcophagi themselves and by the character of the paintings. At Narce in the Faliscan territory, if we are to trust in this particular the elaborate, but much discredited, report in the Monumenti antichi (Vol. IV), sarcophagi of this form belong to the earliest chamber tombs (p. 148), there assigned to the seventh century B.C. (p. 160), and are later replaced by a funeral couch of tuff, on which the corpse was laid without a covering. The intelligent excavator, Fausto Benedetti, who carried on much of the work on that site, assigns this form to a second period in the evolution of burial in chamber tombs.[2] In any case, the practices at Narce and at Toscanella may not have been identical. Thus there is little but the character of the paintings to determine the date or dates. It is obvious that A and B are archaic. Assuming that Etruria did not lag much, if at all, behind Greece in the development of drawing, we may say that the eyes of the sphinxes, drawn in full front view, with the circle which represents iris and pupil placed in the middle of the opening between the lids, indicate a date before 480 B.C. and probably before 500 B.C. All things considered, some time in the latter half of the sixth century (550–501 B.C.) may be suggested for A. B may, I think, be contemporary with A, in spite of the fact that the coiled bodies of the hippocamps have not hitherto been known to occur before the fifth century. C, on the other hand, looks decidedly later than A. Its more varied coloring is favorable to this conclusion. So is its more truthful and animated rendering of the aquatic birds. So are the types of its sea dragons. And, above all, in view of the unsuccess of the vase painters of the sixth century, whether working in the black-figured[3] or the red-figured[4] style, in their occasional attempts to render the

[1] Furtwängler, Die antiken Gemmen, Plates XVIII, 51; LXIII, 14; LXIV, 28.

[2] Benedetti, Gli scavi di Narce, pp. 19, 21.

[3] For instance, François vase: Furtwängler-Reichhold, Griechische Vasenmalerei, Plates I–II; Chalcidian amphora: Monumenti dell' Instituto, Vol. I, Plate LI; terra-cotta plaque in Berlin: Antike Denkmäler, Vol. II, Plate X, 1.

[4] For instance, amphora of Andocides: Furtwängler-Reichhold, *op. cit.*, Plate CXXXIII; psycter of Euphronius, *ibid.*, Plate LXIII.

human face in front view, it is hard to believe that so respectable an achievement as the head of the snake-legged demon would have been possible before the fifth century. In fact, if this sarcophagus stood quite alone, I should be inclined to propose an even later date for it. As it is, I hesitate to separate it widely from its companions. The discovery of additional sarcophagi of this type may clear up the chronological questions involved. Meanwhile the Chicago specimens are made accessible to students of Etruscan antiquities.

ETRUSCAN SARCOPHAGUS A.

END OF SARCOPHAGUS A.

ETRUSCAN SARCOPHAGUS B.

ETRUSCAN SARCOPHAGUS B (SIDE OPPOSITE THE ONE IN PRECEDING PLATE).

END OF SARCOPHAGUS B.

END OF SARCOPHAGUS B (OPPOSITE THE ONE IN PRECEDING PLATE).

ETRUSCAN SARCOPHAGUS C.

ETRUSCAN SARCOPHAGUS C (SIDE OPPOSITE THE ONE IN PRECEDING PLATE).

END OF ETRUSCAN SARCOPHAGUS C.